

REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action dated December 1, 2003. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and allow the pending claims based on the amendment and remarks presented herein.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 40, 49, 88, 97-98, 119, 132, 137, 141, 156, 176 and 194 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification as originally filed.

Regarding claim 1, the Examiner presented that the following recitation is not supported by the specification: "identifying the question with a discrete group of open questions for the expert to answer, at least one of the open question in the group being specifically designated to be routed to the expert by one of (a) one of the users and (b) one of the experts." First, the adjective "open" preceding the term "question" has been redacted by amendment from this claim 1 as well as each claim in which it appears in order to more clearly recite the invention, despite the phrase "open questions" being supported in the specification as originally filed, see page 8, lines 18 to 21, i.e., "unanswered questions referred by another expert..."

Support for this amendment is found in the originally filed specification as follows:

(a) The description of Fig. 6A and Fig. 6A itself. First, Fig. 6A is described as the home page or Top Level which is presented to the expert (see page 8, lines 2-3). Then, Fig. 6A provides in the "Top Level" box the following text: "[p]age lists how many pending Q's there are broken into categories for Q's directed to Expert by name. Q's asked to anybody. Q's referred to Expert for initial answer and Q's referred to Expert for supplementary answer." Then, in the "Refer Question" box, the text is as follows: "[p]age has a list of other experts... to accompany referral. Expert may use this page without answering question... or answer question and use this page."

(b) Page 1, line 22 to page 2, line 1 of the originally filed specification provides how experts "can refer questions to other experts."

(c) Page 2, lines 5 to 7 of the originally filed specification provides “questions posed by users... with client interfaces... a question is received at the server from a user via one of the client interfaces and routed to one of the experts...”

(d) Page 7, lines 10 to 12 of the originally filed specification provides “If the user chooses to ask a question, server 114 displays a page which prompts the user to fill in a question and a title... permit a user to select an expert to receive the question.

(e) Page 8, lines 18 to 21 of the originally filed specification provides: “... questions can reach an expert in one of four ways: (1) unanswered questions referred by another expert... (3) questions directed to a specific expert by a user.”

(f) Page 8, lines 16 to 16 of the originally filed specification provides: “Figure 7 is an example of how a expert home page can appear on an expert interface...”

These excerpts make clear that the claim 1 amendment is supported by the originally filed specification. More particularly, questions are identified to the expert on her home page (see support above (a) and (f)), the questions are for the expert to answer (see support above (a) and (e)), the questions are divided by category, including those routed to the expert from another expert (see support above (a), (b) and (e)) and those routed to the expert from a user (see support above (a), (c), (d) and (e)).

Regarding the 112, first paragraph rejection of claims 40, 49, 88, 98 and 194 for generally the same language as claim 1, the same citations of the originally filed specification support such amendments.

Regarding the 112, first questions rejection of claims 97, 149, 156 and 176 limitations of “unique to the expert ad includes the question as one of a set of open questions routed to the expert based on a request from one of (a) one of the users and (b) one of the experts.” The adjective “open” is redacted by amendment. The discussion which follows provides support for the amendment with “open” redacted. The text preceding “unique to the expert” is the “personal expert

interface.” The personal expert interface is the home page which contains open questions routed from uses and experts, as recited in claim 1. (see support above (f)). Therefore, the support provided for claim 1 above also supports this amendment to claims 97, 149, 156, and 176.

Regarding claim 119, the limitation of “includes the questions as one of a set of open questions being grouped and identified as open questions for the expert to answer...” is supported by the same citations provided for claim 1 (see support above (e)) with “open” redacted.

Regarding claim 132, the limitation of “at least two of the questions being identified with a discrete group of open questions for the expert to answer... routing the questions to the expert based on a request from two different users,” with “open” redacted, is supported by the following citations to the specification as originally filed: “at least two questions... from two different users...” Fig. 6A “Q’s directed to the expert by name; Fig. 7 “Answer one or more of the 105 questions directed to you from the public...”. The reminder of the amendment is supported by the same citations of the originally filed specification as discussed for claim 1.

Regarding claims 132 and 141, the limitation of the “questions being presented to the expert as open questions for the expert to answer”, with “open” redacted, is supported by the same citations of the originally filed specification as discussed for claim 1.

The 112, second paragraph rejection applied to the dependant claims has been responded to base on the remarks regarding the independent claims.

Regarding claim 49, applicants appreciate the Examiner’s identification of this inadvertent error and have corrected it by this amendment.

As a result, applicants respectfully submit that each of the 112, second paragraph rejections has been overcome. The Examiner also rejected claims 132, 137, 141 and their dependant claims as directed to non-statutory subject matter. The Examiner asserted a lack of tangible result based on the preamble limitation of “in order to obtain answers to a plurality of answers.”

Applicants have amended the preamble to recite to route a plurality of questions to the expert." Each of the claims 132, 137 and 141 later recite questions being routed to an expert based on routing requests. Therefore, the Examiner's rejection is overcome.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

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